



Odop: Revamping Rural Landscapes To Tourist Destinations

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ABSTRACT

The Tourism sector is the country's largest industry, contributing to India's GDP. It has emerged as one of the eminent industries, adding to the advancement of the service sector of the country. However, rural tourism forms a relatively small size but is of emerging significance as it could provide an opportunity to connect with the real India.

In 2018, the Government of India implemented the One District One Product scheme with a vision of identifying, promoting and, preserving the cultural heritage of each district in the form of an indigenous product. One District One Product initiative can potentially revamp the rural landscapes to a tourist destination. This would help to showcase the skills, art, and culture of the Indian districts. Moreover, it would positively add to the socio-economic conditions of the districts.

The present study seeks to explore the potentiality of the One District One Product program in encouraging rural tourism and entrepreneurship in India. It can link production with tourism through live demonstration sessions and sale outlets. By formulating effective strategies and collaborative efforts, the Government of India can harness the ODOP program to attract tourists to local areas. This would provide an opportunity to encourage cultural heritage and empower the local communities.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, ODOP, Entrepreneurship, Sustainable development, Tourist Destination.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

According to a World Travel & Tourism Council report from 2024, India's tourism industry is growing, with domestic travel playing a crucial role. It has become one of the leading industries, contributing to the expansion of the nation's service sector. Recent data from the international tourism agency shows that in 2023, the tourism industry contributing to India's GDP was just over INR 19.13TN, which is 10% more than the 2019 data. All sorts of tourism are improving the country's economic prospects. Among these, rural tourism is a crucial component.

1.2. Rural Tourism

Rural Tourism is a form of tourism where the tourist discovers and immerses himself in the rural way of life and culture. It entails visiting remote areas and participating in a variety of activities like farming, exploring traditional crafts, village walks, etc. According to Line (1994), rural tourism has been contemplated as a means of accomplishing economic and social development and rejuvenation that can benefit local people.

India's rural tourism industry is crucial to the nation's economy since it has the potentiality to conserve its diverse cultural and natural legacy while also creating jobs and boosting local incomes. According to Grand View Research, a U.S.-based market research agency, the increment in agrotourism alone is expected to reach a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 11.4% between 2022 and 2030.

1.2.1. Importance of Rural Tourism

- **Preservation of Cultural Heritage:** Promoting local handicrafts and protecting cultural heritage may be accomplished in large part through rural tourism. The rich and varied culture legacy that rural areas have to offer can be experienced and appreciated by tourists through rural tourism.
- **Business Opportunity:** Moreover, keeping traditional jobs from disappearing and promoting regional art and craft, rural tourism can also aid in the revitalization of rural communities and generate new economic prospects and jobs. Moreover, it will help in decreasing the migration of rural communities to different regions in search of employment.
- **Recognition and Appreciation:** Rural tourism enables the communities to showcase their skills in the form of their crafts. This shows gratitude and acknowledgment for the labor of the farmers and artisans. Moreover, rural craft provides residents with a chance to start their businesses and access larger markets.
- **Sustainable practices:** Rural tourism can aid in promoting sustainable practices by encouraging eco-friendly products, natural production methods, and usage of environmentally friendly inputs.

1.3. One District One Product: Background

The government's led Initiative One District One Product is grounded on the "One Village One Product" (OVOP) concept, which was created in Japan in the 1980s. The idea of the OVOP movement was to develop a village by marketing an indigenous product that presents the cultural legacy. The uniqueness of this approach is in the possibility of achieving regional economic development by identifying and further producing goods using local resources only, developing packaging and label design, subsequent quality control, and promoting through local and global markets (UNDP, 2021).

Utilising the OVOP movement as a model, the CM of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Yogi Adityanath, introduced the ODOP Scheme in 2018, to strengthen the local communities by showcasing unique products from seventy-five districts. Eventually, the initiative was implemented across the whole country. The ODOP Initiative has identified 1102 products from 761 districts nationwide (ODOP- National Portal of India, 2023).

1.3.1. Aims and Objectives

- To raise the earnings and number of local jobs, which causes a drop in migration for employment.
- To preserve and promote the local skills, crafts, and art.
- To establish a connection between production and tourism through participation in live demonstration events, sale outlets, etc.
- To develop the product artistically through branding and packaging.
- To tackle the problem of economic inequality and regional imbalance.
- To expand the ODOP initiative on nation and worldwide arenas.

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Amitabh Mishra (2014)**, Need of Marketing of India as a tourist destination. The study discusses the marketing and promotional efforts of India in improving the tourism sector. It has evaluated the performance of the tourism industry of several countries and compared it with India. The Conducted study concludes the Indian tourism industry is behind from various countries, however, the marketing and promotional measures undertaken by nation, through the campaign of Incredible India have improved the performance of nation in the tourism industry.
- **Ek Janpath Ek Utpad Yojana Booklet (2018)**, was produced to give background information on the ODOP Initiative. On the occasion of the “Uttar Pradesh Diwas”, it was released. The aim was to promote the distinctiveness of the seventy-five districts of Uttar Pradesh through their craft, skills, and traditional heritage. The booklet includes a list of the ODOP products and a brief overview of their history. The booklet ensures that the ODOP program will be monitored every day. At the district level, the District Magistrate will monitor the developments, and at the state level, the Infrastructure Development Commissioner. In addition to preserving and advancing the skills and crafts, it also opens doors for self-employment for the youth of Uttar Pradesh.
- **Shiladitya Verma (2018)**, Rural Tourism in India-Issues, challenges and Opportunities. The study tried to discover out the awareness, opportunities, and challenges of rural tourism. The study highlights the benefits and drawbacks of rural tourism on economic, environmental, and socio-cultural basis. It concludes that the government should recognize the significance of rural tourism and provide a healthy competitive environment.
- **Aditya P. Tripathi & Noopur Agarwal (2021)**, the study outlines the impact of the ODOP initiative, an economic revitalization program on export and job creation in Uttar Pradesh. The study examined how the ODOP program helped to revive Uttar Pradesh’s economy. It looked at the plan and evaluated how it would affect the state’s economy, export promotion, and job creation between 2018 to 2020.
- **Dr. Siddhartha Pandey (2021)**, the study discussed the sustainability of the ODOP product of Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. The researcher made an effort to comprehend the problems faced by the small entrepreneurs of the district. He considered a case study for the same.
- **Akhilesh Chandra Pandey & Abhishek Tiwari (2023)**, Innovation, quality and visibility: Strategic imperative for ODOP. The study spotlights the various significant factors that are adding to the success of ODOP. In their study, they outlined the Strategic Imperatives of the ODOP based on the Innovation, Visibility, Branding and Marketing, and Export Hub through Brand equity. Moreover, it studies the financial schemes available under the ODOP initiative.

3.0. OBJECTIVE

- To give insights to the present scenario of Tourism sector of UP.
- To figure out the various strategies through which the ODOP scheme can boost rural tourism.
- To determine the various challenges that can faced in paving the way for rural tourism.

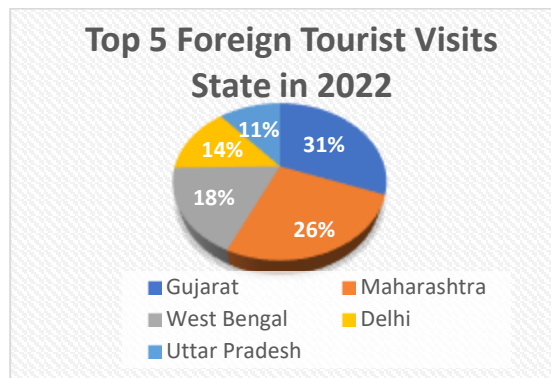
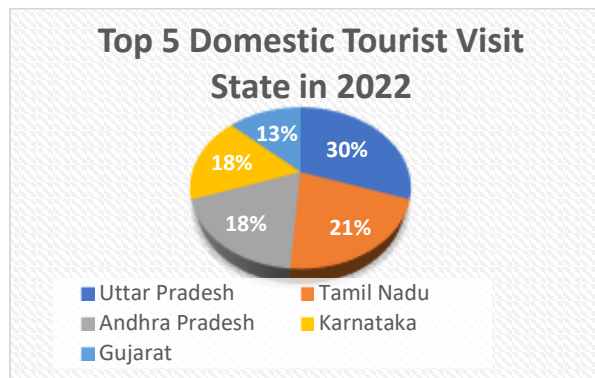
4.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive and conceptual approach. The facts and statistics were gathered from the secondary data. The study utilized current literature, which includes research papers, PIB reports, documents, and online materials.

5.0. FINDINGS

• Present scenario of Tourism sector in Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh accounted for 30% of travel and tourism in India in 2022 and was the most popular destination for domestic tourists. However, it came in fifth for international visitors, out of 11% of all visitors to India.



SOURCE:

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

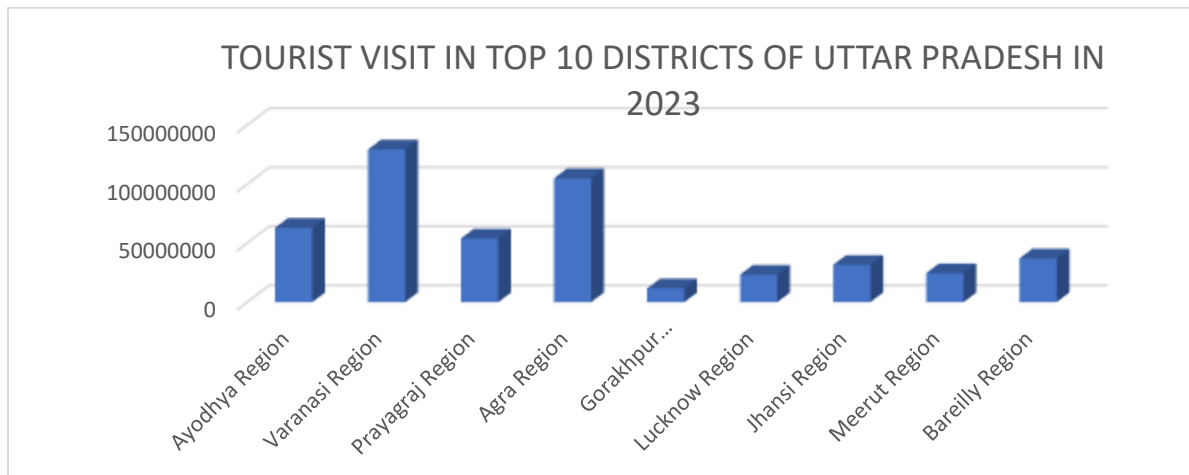
Table 1 shows how many tourists, both domestic and foreign, travelled to Uttar Pradesh between 2017 and 2023. Additionally, it displays the percentage change in visitors from the preceding year. Approximately 48 crore tourists visited Uttar Pradesh in 2023, witnessing its rich cultural and traditional heritage, according to UP Tourism data. It caused the overall number of visitors to climb by 50.72% over the prior year. However, as a result of COVID-19, there was a decrease in the percentage of tourists visiting Uttar Pradesh in 2020, with a percentage decrease of 83.90.

TABLE 1: NO. OF TOURIST VISITED UTTAR PRADESH BETWEEN 2017 AND 2023

YEAR	DTV	FTV	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (%)		
				DTV	FTV	TOTAL
2017	23,39,77,619	35,56,204	23, 75,33,823	(+) 9.56	(+) 12.65	(+) 9.61
2018	28,50,79,848	37,80,752	28,88,60,600	(+) 21 .84	(+) 6.31	(+) 21.60
2019	53,58,55, 162	47,45,181	54,06,00,343	(+) 87.96	(+) 25.50	(+) 87.14
2020	8,61,22,293	8,90,932	8,70, 13,225	(-) 83.92	(-) 81 .22	(-) 83.90
2021	10,97,08435	44,737	10,97,53,172	(+)27.39	(-) 94.97	(+) 26.14
2022	31,79,13,587	6,48,986	31,85,62,573	(+)189.78	(+)1350.66	(+)190.25
2023	47,85,25,688	16,01,503	48,01,27,191	(+) 50.52	(+)146.77	(+)50.72

SOURCE: UP TOURISM

Table 2 shows the ten districts of Uttar Pradesh contributing to Travel & Tourism Industry in 2023. Varanasi region has attracted most tourists, both domestic and foreign, in 2023 with almost 13 crore visitors visiting, followed by the Agra and Ayodhya region, with 10 crore and 6 crore visitors overall, respectively.

TABLE. 2

SOURCE: UP TOURISM

• **ODOP Initiative: Strategies that can boost rural tourism**

- **Thematic Events & Workshops:** The Organisation of more events and workshops on nation and worldwide levels would provide a stage for the artisans and farmers' work. It will spotlight the unique tradition of each district. Such platforms can become a powerful means to attract tourists to visit the place associated with the product to get deeper insights into the product and the region. Souvenir and gift distribution can attract eager or interested consumers to visit the origin place of the product.
- **Virtual Reality:** In an era of technology, it is very important to be technology-driven. Enabling virtual reality in tourism can attract more tourists as it enables them to experience the destination firsthand before visiting the place.
The Employment of a simulated experience can enable the viewer to explore the region. This would promote tourism by encouraging the viewers to visit the destination more engagingly. Employment of virtual reality experience would encourage the interested tourist to visit, experience and explore the real environment, and interact with the artisans about their art.
- **Agritourism:** Agritourism means inviting tourists to visit a farm to experience the agricultural activities. It is a commercial activity which gives extra earnings to the owners. Agritourism can be a viable means to promote rural tourism in India as 65% of India dwells in rural areas, as per Economic Survey, 2021. Agricultural products recognized under the ODOP scheme can be linked with tourism.
ODOP scheme can promote agritourism by arranging tours of these ODOP farm products. This would enable the tourist to explore the surroundings of the region and to experience our rural life through farm stay, learning farming practices, etc.
- **Collaboration:** Collaboration among the various local departments, local communities, travel agents or tour operator, and artisans could create an experiential tour. Joint efforts of Public and Private agencies can help in promoting unique crafts, ethnic art forms of embroidery, and paintings recognized under the ODOP scheme, which can be developed as a tourism product.
- **Digital Strategy:** The Tourism Ministry should engage media agencies to appeal to tourists to visit "New India". Rich and unique content writing can be used as a marketing channel. Moreover, social media platforms can be used to showcase the local beauty of the state and the nation.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Apart from promoting regional and socially balanced development, the scheme also promotes the idea of Sustainable entrepreneurship. Products from Assam created from bamboo waste, banana-fiber products from Kushinagar, Moonj products, and Ajrakh hand block prints are a few of the environmental-friendly ODOP products the list is huge. This shows the immense potential of the ODOP products of the country. Eco-friendly production methods, the usage of local, and natural raw materials could be used to attract the tourists to visit the environmentally-friendly region.

• Challenges faced while attracting Rural Tourism

- **Inadequate Infrastructure Frame:** The Promotion of rural tourism demands sufficient infrastructural facilities. However, rural areas often dearth the basic requirements of healthcare, roads, electricity, and water facilities. This could create a hindrance in providing quality services to the tourists.
- **Destruction of ecology:** Mismanagement in handling rural tourism can often lead to adverse impacts on the environmental surroundings of the area. Tourism could lead to problems like overcrowding of tourists, wastage of locally available resources, pollution and many more. Local communities and related parties should seek that tourism does not lead to the destruction of the ecological environment.
- **Problem in integrating technology:** Integration of technology with tourism requires huge investment. It would be tough for the poor artisans and farmers to adopt this technology as they may suffer from low-income levels. The Government of India should take the responsibility of integrating technology with tourism to reduce the burden on the local communities.
- **Resist to accept:** It has been seen often that the rural people resist accepting and making their village a tourist destination. A Lack of awareness among the rural people regarding rural tourism can limit the growth of the people belonging to that region.

• Other Key Initiatives linking Craftmanship and Rural Tourism

In addition to the ODOP Initiative, various other programs exist that can support the growth of rural tourism by establishing a link between Indian handicrafts and rural tourism. A list of a few of them, is given below:

- **Craft Village:** A Craft Village is a contemporary idea wherein tourism and craft marketing are combined and take place at one location. Furthermore, having a space to live and work, artisans are also allowed to market their creations, which guarantees their income. In India, eight craft villages have been lifted up for 'Linking Textile with Tourism'. Those eight villages are Raghurajpur (Odisha), Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh), Vadaj (Gujarat), Naini (Uttar Pradesh), Anegundi (Karnataka), Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu), Taj Ganj (Uttar Pradesh), Amer (Rajasthan). Under the Craft Village initiative, the Government will rejuvenate the village by funding infrastructure improvements. This will aid in the promotion of handicrafts and will raise the living standard of the local people.
- **National Best Tourism Village Competition:** The Ministry of Tourism initiated the National Best Tourism Village Competition in 2023 to recognize and appreciate outstanding villages, boost the tourism sector, and promote cultural legacy. This initiative helps in developing healthy competition among the villages to actively contribute towards the nation's economy.
- **Handloom Park:** Pochampally, a village in Telangana, is renowned for its ancient saree weaving handloom park on national and international levels. Famous for its saree weaving, Pochampally has found itself in UNESCO's Tentative list of heritage sites in India. It was covered under the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2005. Moreover, it was awarded as the Best Tourism Village in India in 2021 by United Nations World Tourism Organisation. In addition to preserving the traditional art and crafts, more handloom parks in India can help boost the tourism sector.

6.0. CONCLUSION

One District One Product initiative was implemented to encourage the cultural heritage, art forms, and skills of each district. The initiative has multiple roles to play, one of which is to connect production with tourism. The given study outlines how, by leveraging ODOP products, one can make a district into a tourist destination. ODOP initiative has immense potential to promote rural tourism and entrepreneurship in India.

ODOP products can be used as a powerful means to attract tourists to visit the region to get in-depth knowledge about the product and the area. Live demo workshops, souvenirs, and gift distribution are a few strategies which can be utilized to develop interest among the people to experience the rural lifestyle. To enhance the country's economic prospects and complement each other, the Indian Government ought to establish links between the ODOP project and the tourism sector.

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